

Veterinary Nurses Council

Wednesday 16 November 2022 at 10.00am to be held remotely by
Microsoft Teams

Agenda

	Classification¹	Rationale²
1. Apologies for absence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. Declarations of interest	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3. Obituaries	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
4. Minutes of meeting held on 14 September 2022		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1,2,3,4
5. Matters arising	Oral report	n/a
6. CEO update	Oral report	n/a
Matters for decision by VN Council and reports from Committees (unclassified items)		
7. VN Education Committee Minutes of meeting held on 12 October 2022		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	2,3,4
8. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Minutes of meeting of CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee held on 27 October 2022	Unclassified	n/a

Matters for note

9. Reports from RCVS Committees

9.01	VN Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
9.02	Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
9.03	RVN Disciplinary Committee	Unclassified	n/a

10. Policy and Public Affairs update

Oral report
Unclassified

11. Communications report

Oral report
Unclassified

12. Any other business (unclassified)

13. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 8 February 2023

Confidential and private items (closed session)

14. Risk Register

14.01	Risk Register Summary.	Confidential	1,2,3,4
14.02	Any items arising from the current meeting to be added to the Risk Register		

15. VN Education Committee confidential items

Confidential items from meeting of 12 October 2022

Confidential **2,3,4**

16. Items for RCVS Committees

Oral report

17. VN Futures

Oral report

18. Any other business (confidential items)

Oral report

Annette Amato

Secretary, VN Council

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¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
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Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

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Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	16 November 2022
Title	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 14 September 2022
Summary	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 14 September 2022
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix (confidential)
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk 020 7202 0737

Classifications		
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Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2,3,4

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Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held at the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN on Wednesday, 14 September 2022 at 10:30 am

Members:

Mr M E Rendle (Chair)	
Mrs B S Andrews-Jones (Vice-Chair)	Mrs D L Lewis*
Miss J L Beckett^	Dr S Paterson^
Miss A Carr	Dr K A Richards
Mr D J Dyer	Ms S Richardson
Ms S L Fox	Mrs C Roberts^
Mrs S D Howarth	Miss H R Witchell*
Mrs K E Kissick*	

*Denotes absent

^Denotes remote

In attendance:

Miss N Bance	Registration Administrator
Mr L Bishop^	Media and Publications Manager (open session only)
Dr N T Connell	Treasurer / Officer Team Observer
Ms J Delaloye^	Head of Finance (agenda item 16 only)
Mrs J Dugmore^	Director of Veterinary Nursing (DoVN)
Ms E C Ferguson^	Registrar
Miss S Gibbens	VN Qualifications Manager
Mrs V Hedges	VN Examinations Manager
Mr R Hewes	Head of Insight and Engagement
Ms C McCann^	Assistant Registrar / Director of Operations (DoO)
Ms J MacDonald^	VN Futures Project Lead (open session only)
Mr B Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
Ms J Soreskog-Turp	Lead for Postgraduate Education (open session only)

Chair's introduction and welcome to new member

1. The Chair welcomed members and guests and outlined the order of the meeting.
2. Miss Beckett was welcomed to her first meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council. Miss Witchell would be welcomed at a future meeting.

Apologies for absence

3. Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs Kissick, Mrs Lewis, Ms Lockett (CEO), and Miss Witchell.

Declarations of interest

4. There were no declarations of interest to report.

Obituaries

5. There had been no written obituaries received. Council stood for a minute silence for Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth II, patron of the College, who had died on 8 September 2022, and for colleagues and all members of the professions who had passed since it last met.
6. It was noted that the President, Dr Donald, would attend the funeral of Her Majesty and represent the veterinary professions.

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2022

7. Council had had the opportunity to comment electronically on the unclassified minutes and classified appendix. There were no further comments.
8. The unclassified minutes and classified appendix were accepted as a true record.

Matters arising

9. There were no matters arising to report.

CEO update

10. It was noted that the update provided a much broader picture of the work the College was undertaking, and the CEO was praised for her hard work.
11. There were no comments, and the update was noted.

Matters for decision by VN Council and reports from committees (unclassified items)

VN Education Committee (VNEC)

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2022

12. The Chair of VNEC outlined the paper and highlighted:

- pre-accreditation support: one of two visits had been undertaken and the feedback was really positive for the support visits undertaken by the Qualifications Manager and Director of VN (DoVN) for the different centres. The Education Quality Improvement Manager was collating feedback and that was going well; it was hoped that the support visits would have a positive impact;
- action plan monitoring: following accreditations, quality monitoring activities and more general monitoring of quality assurance were discussed, in particular the Pre-Registration Examination Board, which required a new member and a Chair;
- post-registration qualifications: the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) reported an increased number of students on their new certificates, which was positive, and contingencies had been put in place to support the additional numbers.

13. The Chair was pleased to note the continuing momentum for the post-registration courses; it was a credit to VNEC.

Meeting held on 16 June 2022

14. The Chair of VNEC outlined the paper and highlighted:

- applications to Register: the College was continuing to monitor the number of students submitting their completed applications that had less than the required 1,800 hours; numbers were not increasing;
- VetSkill accreditation status: they were previously given conditional accreditation; evidence had now been received to address the issues raised in the report, so conditions had been removed and they now had full accreditation;
- Hartpury University (HU): the Committee had agreed to offer full accreditation for a number of Postgraduate Certificates in Advanced Veterinary Nursing for:
 - o Equine Critical Care
 - o Equine Diagnostic Imaging and Rehabilitation
 - o Perioperative Nursing and Patient Safety
 - o Clinical Nursing and Client Support

It was great that HU had developed this 'niche' area;

- University of Central Lancashire: besides its other certificates in dentistry and clinical coaching and mentoring, it received full accreditation for:

- Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Surgical Nursing Care)
- Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Anaesthesia and Analgesia)

This meant there was a real range of certificates available for nurses to choose from.

15. Comments and questions included:

- at paragraph 29 of the paper, it should read Scotland's Rural College, it was not a university yet;
- looking at the equine course at Level 7, was the Council comfortable with the amount of support given to the students coming through from the diploma? It was noted that, those entering the qualification with a Level 3 Diploma would be upskilling via the research skills Level 6 module prior to stepping up to complete at Level 7;
 - if the students were struggling the university would put support in place, to help them with study skills – it was difficult to tell with people coming from different backgrounds who would do well at what level;
- Glasgow's courses were tied to a Master's process, so there was the opportunity to progress; it was a slightly different process to HU that would be good to see how it develops.

16. There were no other comments, and the reports were noted.

Matters for note

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

17. Mrs Roberts introduced the report and highlighted:

- focus remained on supporting members to either engage with the outcomes-based CPD requirement or using the 1CPD app, and how to reach members that still were not using 1CPD; exemptions for people that had not opted to use 1CPD were listed in the paper;
- it had not been possible to agree an outcome, with regards to exemptions, for overseas practitioners and further discussion was needed between Education, and Registration, Committees regarding CPD requirements for overseas users; this would be brought to the next meeting.

18. There were no comments, and the report was noted.

Reports from RCVS committees

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

19. There were no comments, and the report was noted.

Standards Committee (SC)

20. The Registrar reported that, following the SC meeting earlier in the week, there had been a discussion about updating the Controlled Drugs (CD) guidance, a document that had been on the College website since 2015 that required some general non-controversial amendments. Two points to mention specifically that were included in the guidance were:

- the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and the Home Office (HO) had brought out changes in terms of destruction of CDs and who could act as an independent witness. The College had written to the VMD and HO expressing its concerns that there was a build up within practices that could potentially be an issue if people were unable to destroy drugs that required it and there were a lot in storage. The changes were that a person could be classed as independent if they worked for the same franchise or corporate group, provided the practices had a different owner and were separate legal entities; that they must not share stock with or provide services other than the destruction of CDs to the practice. However, VMD had also provided an example of out-of-hours providers being in the same building and being allowed to witness CD destruction, which was a contradiction and clarification was being sought before final wording could be agreed and incorporated into the guidance;
- changes to storage requirements for quinalbarbitone and somulose (that contains quinalbarbitone and cinchocaine), which was classed as a Schedule 2 drug but was exempt from 'safe custody' requirements i.e. kept in a locked container. SC approved that it should be locked away in the same manner as other Schedule 2 drugs irrespective of not being classified. This was already a core requirement recommendation under the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) and the College would be in touch with the HO to enquire if reclassification was possible, noting that it could take a long time; thus, changes would be made to the supplementary guidance now as a core requirement in PSS and would apply to all practices. Wording was being finalised and information would be uploaded to the website in its amended form.

21. It was noted that it was a positive step to get the guidance amended.

22. There were no comments, and the proposed amendments were noted.

RVN Disciplinary Committee (RVN DC)

23. There were no comments, and the report was noted.

Policy and Public Affairs update

24. The Policy and Public Affairs Manager updated Council on recent work. Primary focus had been on legislation work and it was noted that there continued to be encouraging discussions with Defra to prepare for the possibility of new legislation that the profession had needed for a long time. There had been some useful legal advice on the structure of any new legislation, including the split between primary and secondary legislation. One example was that Schedule 3 was currently fixed and restrictive around what veterinary nurses (VNs) could do, and work was being carried out to ascertain how a more flexible provision could be implemented.

25. On the public affairs and lobbying side, the College continued to write to Members of Parliament (MPs) to share its recommendations. An event would be hosted in October at the House of Lords, that would be for parliamentarians to attend and talk to members of the College, its stakeholders, and other allied professionals the College was looking to regulate and who had helped with the media campaign scheduled to launch soon, about the detail around the benefit of new legislation. There would also be an exhibition with artifacts to help demonstrate the differences between what it was like in 1966 and how things were now.
26. It was noted that there was no definite timeline to legislation yet, but the College was speaking informally to EFRACom (Defra's committee of MPs) and was working hard to be ready; it was hoped that a formal presentation to EFRACom would follow.
27. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:
- the cost-of-living crisis would impact the industry as well as other sectors particularly around energy cost increases; when it was coupled with labour costs, labour shortages, animal welfare concerns, etc., people were deeply concerned about being able to pay for medical costs for animals as well as insurance costs. Was the profession likely to see a significant number of animals handed over to vets to euthanase because they were unable to keep them any longer? It could be as significant an issue as Covid had been and discussions with the government needed to reflect those challenges as well as the whole regulation of the sector;
 - following the Workforce Summit in November 2021, a Summary Report had been published and the team was producing an Action Plan as well as having ongoing discussions with the British Veterinary Association (BVA) – new legislation would really help to bring in paraprofessionals to regulate them and allow for effective delegation within the veterinary team as a real way forward;
 - there was still work to be done to educate vets how they could delegate appropriately to VNs that would ease the situation immediately. Some challenges were economic, but the College could focus on the framework for working practices;
 - delegation could be helped by using the 'SUPERB' poster published a few years' ago;
 - the poster was slightly odd in its bias that it felt it was more about *not* delegating – it was not well received amongst VNs. There was confusion about delegation, from both vet and VN perspectives so work could be undertaken to clarify matters;
 - Linnaeus had adapted the poster and created a flow chart of decision-making to get to a point for both vets and VNs so there was confidence in what could, and could not, be delegated; it appeared to be working well. There was, however, an issue with the wording of 'vet-led team' – the vet undertook clinical leadership, but there was the possibility of a VN leading a team or a business, or other people leading a business, and the cross-over could be challenging;

- 'vet-led' was an imperfect term as there were clinical areas where VNs were not making the diagnosis but were driving the direction of travel; used in the right context it was fine but it was a term that could be used slightly sub-optimally;
- there was a suggestion in the consultation paper to use 'veterinary team' but it was important to preserve diagnosis for vets and for an animal to be under the vet's care regardless of who was taking the lead at 'front end' delivery. BVA and the representative bodies felt very strongly about the 'vet-led team' model and the terminology behind it; it was not likely that the term would be included in the legislation;
- was there a conflict between additional delegation and wanting to do more and the pay issue / cost-of-living impact?
 - not so much of a 'conflict' because it made the job more interesting, but it would be nice if it came with remuneration;
 - it was hoped that VNs would be able to do more including procedures that were not included in the Day One Competences (D1C) or Day One Skills (D1S) that could be mapped to becoming an Advanced Practitioner so there could be a career path linked to pay increases and help with retention;
- it was easier to recruit VNs than it was vets at the moment and there were ongoing discussions country-wide around using an experienced VN in a surgery situation much like medical advanced practitioner nurses to help run a Doctor's GP practice; that was also an opportunity for development;
- it was not so much asking VNs to do more, but rather to do different things that were of higher value that they could take off the vets, to free up the vet to do the things that only they could do;
 - VNs were getting better at having awkward conversations around salaries and work packages – it was about being treated well and being understood;
- a recent pilot was run by Linnaeus where every nursing task was itemised per patient that had considerable push-back from vet teams in terms of how that would be perceived by the clients and whether any concerns would be raised, but in fact there had not been a single query from clients because of the approach taken from informed consent at the time of admission;
 - there could be an empowerment piece that could be undertaken with both VNs and vets; to manage expectations of who would be the best person to undertake a specific role or task to enable clients to see someone more quickly;
- the VN profession was good at being ahead of the curve and it was VNC's responsibility to react in a timely way if there was anything it could do to help going forwards;

- was the College engaging with opposition parliamentarians as well as it was unknown what would happen with the government in the future? It would be unfortunate to have legislation lost in any transition;
 - o yes, discussions were ongoing, and the College would be prepared should there be a leadership change.

28. The Chair brought the discussion to a close and thanked the Policy and Public Affairs Manager for a useful discussion.

VN Futures report

29. The VN Futures (VNF) Project Lead introduced the report and highlighted:

- if anyone had not seen the VNF Interim Report, please see: <https://www.vnfutures.org.uk/resource-items/vn-futures-interim-report-2021/> . The report pulled together the work undertaken over the past five years;
- an animated video clip to depict the work of VNF over the coming months / years was to be produced;
- VNF School Ambassador's Scheme; there was approximately 245 VNs and second-year Student VNs (SVNs) signed up to the Scheme (with more to process), which was really positive. Consideration was being given how to pull the VNs together to create a network to provide support in what was intended to be a very autonomous role; there was a forthcoming meeting with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Learning, who also had some suggestions going forwards.

30. The Chair also highlighted that VNF would be doing some sessions at British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) Congress in October and that thought was being given to create some metrics for the Ambassadors to measure what success looked like; what worked; what did not work; what resourcing was required, etc. STEM was a good starting point and consideration was to be given to linking up with others to provide support, alongside career people in colleges and universities.

31. There were no comments, and the report was noted.

Communications report

32. The Media and Publications Manager updated Council, highlighting:

- Events Team was busy preparing for BVNA Congress: as well as the VN Futures, the RCVS Academy would be promoted as well as the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) and 1CPD app;
- thank you from the Events Team to all who had participated in the recent VN Days in Manchester and Oxford, and the Jubilee evening at the Museum of Natural History; feedback was that they had been successful events and had been very well received;

- RCVS Academy had recently published its VN Clinical Supervisor Training Course; it was an impressive and interactive course designed to complement and add value to the personal training undertaken through their institutions;
- a training collaboration would shortly be announced between Mind Matters (MMI) and VNF around the topic of civility, following on from the SVN survey in 2020 which had found bullying and incivility was a big issue not only for SVNs but for VNs in general;
- the courses mentioned would consider how to promote stability and psychological safety in the workplace; how to improve workplace culture and professional respect; and, overall, the way that colleagues communicated with each other, all of which should be interesting and have a number of people signing up to do them;
- there were some student-based events coming up: the Chair was doing introductions to the College talks at two universities – the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in London, and at Bristol University Veterinary School, and there were plans for online sessions too; these would be available to any SVN and would be dependent on them signing up to the event;
- work was ongoing relating to navigating difficult circumstances found early on in practice; aimed equally at vets and VNs it was hoped to be launched on the RCVS Academy platform early 2023;
- the Under Care consultation had been extended slightly to cover the period of National mourning following the death of Her Majesty the Queen; the deadline was now **5:00 pm on Monday, 26 September 2022**. The public survey would be out shortly on the YouGov.co.uk website;
- Abi Hanson was transferring from the Mind Matters Team to join the Communications Team as Media and Publications Officer full time from early October – there would be a phased transition over the next couple of weeks.

33. A progress update was requested on the VN Leaver Survey (in the CEO report). It was noted that more work was being undertaken to find out why people were leaving the profession; the Policy and Public Affairs Team was putting together an exit survey as part of the workforce action plan – so far it had only been geared toward vets, but VNs would be included at the beginning of the next cycle to feed into the workforce model the College was trying to produce. Data would be included from its Register; from surveys like the VN Leaver Survey; from the Survey of the Profession, etc., to build up a picture of why people left; what would make them stay; what would happen in the future; so that a really flexible picture could be built.

34. The Chair reiterated how enjoyable the VN Days and Jubilee celebration had been and to take the VNs through their declaration; it was noticeable that there were still few male VNs but there was a lot of diversity, which was welcomed. It was hoped to record the introduction to the College and make it available to different educational backgrounds. Further, at the Regional Question Time (RQT) held the previous Wednesday evening, there were some conversations that had provided a feel for what people thought about VNs.

35. Thanks were given to the Media and Publications Manager and the wider Communications Team, and the updated was noted.

Any other business (unclassified items)

Import of rescue dogs

36. An update was provided on the import of rescue dogs and a new working group was being set up to develop a framework to help the import process. VNC would be kept updated of developments.

Date of next meeting

37. The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday, 16 November 2022. As it was a remote meeting it would commence at 10:00 am.

Confidential and private items (closed session)

Draft budget 2023

38. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 14.

VN Education Committee (confidential items)

Meeting held on 16 June 2022

39. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 15 – 22.

Meeting held on 9 August 2022

40. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 23 – 32.

Risk Register

41. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 33 – 37.

Items for RCVS committees

42. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 38.

Any other business (confidential items)

43. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 39 – 43.

44. The Chair drew the meeting to a close.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	16 November 2022
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 12 October 2022
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 12 October 2022
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	Classified appendix (confidential)
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

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Veterinary Nurse Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2022

Members:	* Mrs Donna Cotton	-	Employer representative
	Miss Julia Cox	-	Employer representative
	* Ms Sarah Fox	-	VN Council lay member
	Mrs Sarah Holman	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Susan Howarth	-	VN Council veterinary nurse (Chair)
	Miss Sophia Hoyland	-	HE student representative
	* Professor Elizabeth Mossop	-	Independent educationalist
	Mrs Sarah Parkhouse	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Sarah Reynolds-Golding	-	HE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Perdi Welsh	-	Post-registration veterinary nurse provider
	Miss Leigh Willson	-	FE student representative

*absent

In attendance:	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mrs Jasmine Curtis	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	Examinations Manager
	Mrs Tori Page	-	Qualifications Assessor

Apologies for absence

1. The Chair welcomed Leigh Willson to her first meeting of the Committee as Further Education (FE) student representative. Apologies for absence were received from Donna Cotton, Sarah Fox and Elizabeth Mossop.

Declarations of interest

2. Several members declared an interest in relation to specific items on the agenda. These were noted at the relevant item and where considered necessary, the member left the meeting for the discussion of the item.

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) held on 16 June 2022

3. The Committee accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2022 as a correct record. These had been previously circulated to the Committee, and had been presented to VN Council for approval at its meeting in September 2022.

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) held on 10 August 2022

4. The Committee accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2022 as a correct record. These had been previously circulated to the Committee, and had been presented to VN Council for approval at its meeting in September 2022.

Matters arising

5. The Chair reported that a member of VN Council had queried the terminology which had been used in the minutes of the June meeting for SRUC (Scotland's Rural University College), as this is not a University. It was agreed that this should be checked and corrected if necessary.

Afternote: It has been confirmed that the correct title is Scotland's Rural College (SRUC).

6. There were no matters arising on the previous minutes other than items which were included as separate items in the agenda.

Veterinary Nursing update

7. The Director of Veterinary Nursing updated the Committee on recent developments and activities.
8. **External Examiners.** The External Examiner update had not been included in the agenda for the current meeting, as the information was being thoroughly checked and updated. A revised list would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee in December.
9. **Enrolments.** All student enrolments were now being processed through the online portal, which was working well. In the period between 1 August and 11 October 2022 there had been a total of 751 student enrolments. All students utilising the Nursing Progress Log (NPL) had been provided with their login details and access to the version containing the updated Day One Skills and Professional Behaviours. It was not likely that any temporary administrative assistance would be required, as had been the case in the busy enrolment period in previous years, due to the efficiency of the online process.
10. **Registrations.** Guidance was still in place to deal with any registration applications from students who had completed their registrable qualification but had been unable to complete the 1,800 required practice training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic. No applications had been received from students requiring this special consideration from a Covid perspective since the June meeting of the Committee. There had been a few applications for consideration from students who had been unable to complete the required hours for medical reasons, and these had been dealt with separately on an individual basis.
11. **Veterinary Nurses' Days.** Two very successful Veterinary Nurses' Days had been held in the Summer, in Manchester and Oxford. However, there were still many newly registered veterinary nurses who had been unable to obtain a place at one of these events, and it was

intended to hold a further event in Oxford, in February 2023, as well as two further events in 2023.

12. **Clinical Supervisor training.** The Clinical Supervisor training programme had been launched through the RCVS Academy a few weeks previously. This had been accessed by 250 people since the launch and very positive feedback had been received. Details of the programme had been promoted at the recent BVNA congress. The course is not mandatory but is there to support the RCVS requirements in terms of skills and behaviours.
13. **Termination of Accreditation.** The final cohorts of students at the University of Wales Trinity St David and Brighton University, both of which had been on terminal accreditation, had all now completed and registered, and monitoring was no longer required.
14. The RCVS had been notified by the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) that it would be terminating its partnership with Plumpton College. A meeting would be held to discuss the details and an update would be provided at the next VNEC meeting.
15. **Quality Assurance.** The VN Qualifications Manager had completed the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) International Quality Review training and was now a panel member for QAA. This had been a valuable training with insights into processes and procedures, although this may not be utilised directly as QAA had announced that it would no longer be continuing as the Designated Quality Body (DQB) for the Office for Students (OfS) for veterinary and veterinary nursing accreditation events, with effect from the end of March 2023.
16. The Education Quality Improvement Manager had carried out a mapping of OfS and QAA standards against the veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses accreditation standards, in order to determine whether further action would be required by the RCVS to bridge the gap between OfS conditions for registration that will not be reviewed by QAA as the DQB after March 2023, in the event that the DQB is not replaced. The Director of Veterinary Nursing would be reviewing the mapping section relating to veterinary nursing and would then circulate the paper to VNEC for comments by email.
17. **VNEC Terms of Reference.** The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Committee needed to be reviewed and updated in line with the requirements for ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) accreditation. The Committee agreed that the revised ToR could be circulated for review by email in order that they were in place for in time for the ENQA submission in November.

Matters for decision

Licence to practise qualifications

18. **Accreditation visitor approval.**
Perdi Welsh declared an interest as a colleague of one of the visitor applicants. The Chair confirmed that it would not be necessary for her to leave the meeting for this item.

The Committee considered person specifications, Curriculum Vitae and CPD records for two new educator members of the accreditation panel.

19. It was confirmed that the criteria include minimum qualification levels, and that applicants are considered for the relevant panel (Further Education accreditations, Higher Education Accreditations, Post-registration qualification accreditations) on the basis of skills, experience and currency. The Director of Veterinary Nursing agreed that the person specification should be reviewed to ensure that it was sufficiently clear and detailed, and in future the papers provided for the Committee would include information in the cover sheet to confirm the panel for which the applicant was being considered.
20. The Committee agreed that both applicants should be added to the visitor panel at the appropriate level.

Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing Qualifications

21. **Post-registration accreditation – Royal Veterinary College.**
Perdi Welsh declared an interest and left the meeting for discussion of this item.
22. The Committee was provided with the report of an accreditation event conducted to the Royal Veterinary College in July 2022, and the subsequent action plan, in respect of an application for accreditation of the following post registration qualifications:
 - Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing – Medical Nursing
 - Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing – Medical Nursing

It was confirmed in the covering paper that all three Standards had been met, with only one action having been identified. This had also now been met. The Director of Veterinary Nursing confirmed that the accreditation panel had recommended approval of the programme.

23. A few questions were raised by Committee members which could not be answered in the meeting as the Qualifications Manager was not present. The information would be forwarded to the Chair to enable a final decision to be made.

Matters for note

Licence to practise qualifications

Pre-accreditation support

24. The Committee was provided with an overview of the current status of the roll out of the pre-accreditation support package for all Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs), including those AEIs due for accreditation in the academic year 2021/22 which had now undertaken the support, those which had declined the support, and information on the planned meetings for AEIs due for accreditation in the academic year 2022/23.

25. The Chair commented on the large number of support visits which had been carried out during the year and the subsequent number of accreditation visits planned for the forthcoming year, and expressed a concern regarding the workload for the qualifications team.
26. The Director of Veterinary Nursing confirmed that although the accreditation visits would be supported and overseen by the Qualifications Manager, she would not be directly involved in these due to a conflict of interest, having carried out the pre-accreditation support visits. A number of external Chairs were being trained for the accreditation panels, which tied in with the ENQA requirements. The first accreditation visit with an external Chair would be conducted at the end of October 2022.

Action plan monitoring accreditation/re-accreditation

27. The Committee was provided with oral updates from members of the qualifications team on the action plan monitoring and progress with action plans for the following Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs):
- Lantra Awards
 - University of South Wales

Quality Monitoring activities

28. The Committee was provided with papers setting out full updates on quality monitoring activities and the actions which had been taken, for the following universities and centres:
- Bicton College
 - Coleg Sir Gar
 - Duchy College
 - Lantra Awards
 - Oxford Brookes University
 - Royal Agricultural University (Askham Bryan)
 - Reaseheath College
 - South Staffordshire College
 - University of Central Lancashire
 - University of Chester
 - University of Glasgow
 - University of South Wales
 - Wrexham Glyndwr University
 - Edinburgh Napier University
 - Middlesex University
 - Nottingham Trent University
 - University of Plymouth
 - North Highland College
29. It was confirmed that progress reviews are carried out when a FE College changes to a different Awarding Organisation, within the first year, to ensure that all is progressing well.

30. It was commented by a member that their institution had found that having an audit prior to an accreditation event had been very useful.
31. A comment was made that the landscape for colleges is currently very challenging, in respect of recruitment across the board, with limited pay awards and colleges being restricted in terms of their pay offers. This was something that may be picked up more frequently through quality monitoring activities in future.

Action plan quality monitoring - quality assurance

32. Oral reports were provided on the monitoring of action plans and future planned actions for the following AElS and centres:
- Anglia Ruskin University
 - College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)
 - City College Norwich
 - College of West Anglia
 - Coventry University
 - Goddard Veterinary Nursing College
 - Lantra Awards (approval audit)
 - Hartpury University
 - Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Oatridge
 - University of Bristol
 - University of Glasgow (SRUC Barony)
 - University of Plymouth
 - University of Portsmouth
 - Writtle University College
33. A concern was raised by one member who acts as an external examiner for certain institutions, that the reports in the committee were sometimes the first time that they were made aware of programme changes. The Director of Veterinary Nursing confirmed that the RCVS was hoping to work with Advance HE to provide training for External Examiners, and that the Qualifications Manager was progressing this, which should improve communication overall.
34. **City & Guilds.** It was confirmed that all actions relating to City & Guilds OSCE delivery had been completed or closed, including all actions for City & Guilds delivered examinations, as well as those delivered on behalf of City & Guilds by other Awarding Organisations. No further auditing activity was planned for this programme, which would close in Summer 2023.

Programme changes

35. **University of Chester.** The Committee noted a minor change to the University of Chester's BSc Veterinary Nursing programme, comprising an amended assessment for one module.

Due to the minor nature of the change this had been approved by the Director of Veterinary Nursing.

36. **Lantra Awards.** The Committee noted minor changes regarding wording and clarification of requirements, for the Lantra Awards Level 3 Work Based Diploma in Veterinary Nursing - Small Animal and the Lantra Awards Level 3 Work Based Diploma in Veterinary Nursing – Equine, which had been approved by the Director of Veterinary Nursing.
37. **VetSkill Ltd.** The Committee noted a small change in the assessment resit process for the VetSkill VTEC Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Companion Animal) and the VetSkill VTEC Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Equine). The Director of Veterinary Nursing and the Qualifications Manager had both been in agreement that these changes were at the discretion of the Awarding Organisation and could be applied as required.

Statistical report

38. The Committee noted statistics on student enrolments for each academic year (1 July to 30 June) over the last five years. The annual information on student enrolments by the HE and FE routes is published in *RCVS Facts*, as well as information on new registrations via the HE and FE routes, and those educated overseas.
39. It was noted that it was difficult to see trends due to the effects of the Covid pandemic. The Director of Veterinary Nursing commented that one of the main barriers to training as a veterinary nurse is the requirement to find a training practice (TP). In 2020 a review of HEIs, AOs and their delivery centres had been carried out, to ensure that each institution had sufficient TPs for its students and was not reliant on students being placed in another institution's TPs. Now that student numbers were increasing, a similar exercise would be planned, and also liaison would take place with the Practice Standards Scheme to see if there was further work that could be done. It was important to ensure that there was sufficient TP coverage for the different pathways which were being developed.
40. It was commented by a member that the increase in FE VN student enrolments was against a national trend reported by the principals network for colleges and universities, where FE enrolments in other subject areas were falling or levelling off. It was noted that the annual self assessment reports would soon be sent out to all HEIs and delivery centres. These reports would provide comparison of TP data and the current landscape and would be reported to future meetings of the committee.

VN Pre-registration Examination Board (PREB)

41. The Examinations Manager presented the minutes of the PREB meeting held on 25 July 2022. The Board had met to discuss and agree the results of the Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) held on 2 and 3 July 2022. There had been 33 candidates in total. Of these, 18 had achieved their qualification overseas, and 15 in the United Kingdom. There had been an 89% pass rate, and all UK graduates had passed. The next

examinations were due to delivered between 5 and 7 November, with 52 candidates due to sit the examination.

Items for publication

42. There were no specific items identified for publication arising from the meeting.

Any other business

43. The Chair raised a query regarding the reports submitted to the Committee and asked whether there was a rubric used to ensure consistency in the rulings as to whether a standard had been met or not met overall. It was confirmed that this was not the case, but that the reports were all quality assured by the Qualifications Manager, and sometimes also the Director of Veterinary Nursing. A member commented that the narrative was also important, and the way that this was transferred into to the action plan and how this was met. The Qualifications Assessors each provided an overview of how they reach the decisions in their reports.
44. The Director of Veterinary Nursing added that she felt there was merit in carrying out some standardisation exercises, and that this would be addressed in the next year.

Meeting dates 2022

45. The remaining meeting date for 2022 was confirmed:
- Tuesday 13 December (remote meeting)

It was agreed by the Committee that the earlier start time of today's remote meeting had worked well, and that provided there was no objection from those members who were not present, future remote meetings should also start at 9.30.

Meeting dates 2023

44. The dates for 2023 were confirmed as follows:
- Tuesday 21 February
 - Tuesday 18 April
 - Wednesday 14 June (in person)
 - Thursday 10 August
 - Thursday 12 October
 - Monday 11 December

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	16 November 2022
Title	Minutes from the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee on the 27 October 2022
Summary	Minutes from the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee on the 27 October 2022
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0704

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

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²Classification rationales

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CPD Policy and Compliance sub-committee Notes of the meeting held on 27 October 2022

Present: Linda Ford Chair
 Jessica Beckett
 Claire Bloor
 Abbie Calow
 Donna Lewis
 Stephen May
 Stephanie Richardson

In attendance: Julie Dugmore Director of Veterinary Nursing
 Esther Kadama Education Assistant
 Artem Kuzmichev Senior Developer
 Linda Prescott-Clements Director of Education
 Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education
 Joanne Stetzel Head of Marketing and Digital Communications

Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially the new members.
2. Alison Reid, James Wood and Claire Roberts had sent their apologies.

Minutes of the meeting on the 8 June 2022

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2022 were received and approved as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising

4. There were no matters arising that were not covered within the main agenda.

1CPD Data/Communication Update

5. The committee received and noted the 1CPD data paper.
6. The data highlighted that a significant number of veterinary surgeons and nurses are recording their CPD but are still not reflecting, even though it is part of the CPD requirement from 2022. It was suggested that it may be due to a lack of awareness, and it was noted that

some functions that were part of the spec for 1CPD, such as not counting the hours until reflected upon and regular reminders, are still not part of the system but have been flagged as a high priority within the development roadmap.

7. Members suggested to make it easier to reflect in the 1CPD app, that the record and reflect sections should be linked as they are in the web version of 1CPD. It was suggested that the text in the web version that asks if you want to reflect should be updated to be made clearer that it is mandatory, and not optional, to reflect on all CPD and therefore it is a choice to either capture reflection at the time of recording the CPD activity or to postpone, but that it must be done prior to the CPD deadline in order to be compliant.

Action: Review features to link record and reflect sections in 1CPD.

8. It was acknowledged that everyone reflects in a different way, and that some prefer to do it straight after the activity, whilst others may want to think about their learning and the impact before recording anything. 1CPD offers great flexibility with reflection, including prompts to guide reflections, open text, audio notes or being able to add attachments.
9. Since it is not clear in 1CPD that members are not compliant simply by recording the hours, the committee agreed that they could not enforce the requirement to reflect on CPD until the features were available in 1CPD. It was noted that Education Committee, VN Council and RCVS Council had agreed the changes to the CPD requirement, so they need to be updated regarding the changes. It was also agreed that RCVS will send customised letters to different member groups letting them know about the requirement and resources to help them.

Action: Update Education Committee, VN Council and RCVS council re changes to enforcing the CPD requirement.

10. Ms Stetzel updated the committee about the CPD comms strategy, reporting that the focus is still on supporting members to understand the requirement and how to use 1CPD.
11. The committee felt that RCVS should explore sending positive messages of feedback to the professions and consider how to celebrate achieving the CPD requirement, including reflecting on CPD. It was suggested that RCVS explore electronic badges or different kinds of gamification to celebrate achievements.

Action: Education/ Dev Team to explore options to celebrating achieving CPD/reflection requirement.

12. There are lots of CPD events planned at the London Vet show in order to raise awareness of CPD, reflection and 1CPD. It was suggested that RCVS should liaise with conference providers to provide QR codes in order to facilitate easier recording in 1CPD, and to encourage time at the end of lectures to record the session and reflect on learning.

Action: Update CPD Comms plan to include liaison with conference providers.

13. The committee agreed that RCVS should send formal communication to all members who are not using 1CPD, to inform them that it is part of the CPD requirement. It was also agreed that the communication will include signposts to support and resources available, such as the new RCVS Academy course on CPD and reflection to help them get started.

Action: RCVS to send out statutory email to non 1CPD users.**Royal College of Pathologists CPD Requirement**

14. At the last meeting, there had been discussions regarding whether members of the Royal College of Pathologist (RCPath) should be exempt from using 1CPD if they already record their learning with the RCPath. Ms Soreskog-Turp had been in touch with them and determined that it is not mandatory for their members to record CPD using their platform and therefore the committee agreed that it would not be appropriate to grant an exemption for members of RCPath on this basis.

Introducing a cut-off date for recording activities in 1CPD

15. The committee received and noted the paper about introducing a cut-off date for recording activities in 1CPD.
16. The committee discussed the benefits of introducing a cut-off date for recording CPD for the previous year, including encouraging regular recording and the committee being able to monitor compliance with the Code of Conduct to ensure high standards and public confidence in the veterinary professions.
17. There were concerns about members working in busy practices who had completed the requirement but have not been able to record it, especially if there was a reason such as illness or care commitments. The committee were reassured that exceptional circumstances would be taken into account and that members could also apply to pause their CPD to reduce the requirement.
18. The committee agreed that two months into the new year would be a suitable cut-off date, but that it is important that the cut-off point is communicated to members, with several reminders.

Action: Education Department to update the CPD Policy regarding the cut-off point for recording CPD.

Non-compliance policy 2023

19. The paper regarding the non-compliance policy for 2023, had already been approved by Education Committee and VN Council so this was presented to inform new committee members of the new policy. It was noted that the timeline in the policy may need to be reviewed in light of decisions regarding cut-off date for recording CPD for the previous year.

CPD Requirement for overseas vets

20. Education and Registration Committee had a joint meeting in August to discuss the CPD requirements for overseas members of RCVS and it was agreed that the CPD requirements should be the same for all members, however using 1CPD should not be compulsory for overseas members.

21. The committees suggested that overseas members should self-certify whether they are CPD compliant as part of the annual renewal and that RCVS should audit a sample to check compliance, which would also be an opportunity to offer overseas members support and advice.
22. The committee felt that it is important for RCVS to check CPD records for any members who have been on the overseas register and not recorded CPD using 1CPD if they apply to change their status to UK practising. The committee also discussed that fact that RCVS issues letters of good standing to overseas regulators in order for members to register with them, and it was suggested that this could be a mechanism for highlighting whether a member is non-compliant.

Action: Education Department to check with Registrar whether CPD requirement could be checked as part of issuing letters of good standing.

Any other business

23. There were no other items of business to discuss.

Follow up of non-compliant members

Claire Bloor left the meeting for this item

24. The committee received the report detailing the follow up of non-compliant members. The committee agreed with all recommendations in the report but noted that one VN was undergoing cancer care and recommended that the staff team attempt to telephone this member again, before sending them a letter.

Next Meeting

25. The next meeting is yet to be agreed but Ms Soreskog-Turp agreed to circulate meeting dates for the next year.

Action: Circulate meeting dates for 2023.

Jenny Soreskog-Turp

October 2022

j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	16 November 2022
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Annual Report to VN Council
Summary	This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Sandra Neary Secretary to the RVN PIC s.neary@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0730</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0740</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

¹Classifications explained

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Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to VN Council

Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Veterinary Nurses Council, there have been two meetings of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee, which took place on 20 September and 1 November.

RVN Concerns received / registered

2. Between 23 August and 1 November 2022, there were five new concerns relating to RVNs. Of these five new concerns:
 - Three cases are currently under investigation by the Case Examiner Group (a veterinary nurse and lay member on RVN PIC and a Case Manager).
 - Two cases have been registered under the new concerns process and are under investigation by a Case Manager, Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary surgeon and a lay member (Stage 1 Preliminary Investigation Committee).

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. No new concerns have been considered by the RVN PIC between 23 August and 1 November 2022. One ongoing case was considered at the meeting on 20 September. The Committee decided to refer the case to the College's external solicitors for formal statements to be taken. Another ongoing case was considered at the meeting on 1 November and the Committee decided to refer to the case to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

Ongoing Investigations

4. Three concerns are currently under investigation, and these will be returned to the RVN PIC for a decision in due course.

Health Concerns

5. One RVN is currently being managed in the context of the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Concerns

6. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Disciplinary Hearings

7. Since the last report, one case has been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee. This will be listed for a hearing in due course.

A disciplinary hearing in respect of Stephanie Hazelwood took place from Monday 22nd to Tuesday 23rd August 2022. The Disciplinary Committee found that the charges amounted to serious professional misconduct and decided to impose a three-month suspension.

A disciplinary hearing in respect of Chelsea Strangeway took place from Tuesday 20th to Wednesday 21st September 2022. The Disciplinary Committee found that Ms Strangeway's conduct amounted to serious professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to remove her name from the Register.

A disciplinary hearing in respect of Katherine Heyes took place from Wednesday 27th to Thursday 28th September 2022. The Disciplinary Committee found that the charge amounted to disgraceful conduct, and it decided to issue Ms Heyes with a reprimand and formal warning as to her future conduct.

Operational matters

8. As of 1 October 2022, a new concerns investigation process was introduced. The CEG stage of the process has been replaced by Stage One Preliminary Investigation Committees which, rather than using the 'arguable case' threshold, will consider from the outset whether there is a realistic prospect that the alleged conduct constitutes serious professional misconduct and that there is sufficient evidence to prove this.
9. Training took place for members of the department and Committee members, both new and existing on 23 September. This covered the changes to the concerns process, as well as other matters and updates to the relevant field of law.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	16 November 2022
Title	Disciplinary Committee Report
Summary	Update of RVN Disciplinary Committee
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Yemisi Yusuph Disciplinary Committee Clerk Tel: 020 7202 0729 Email: y.yusuph@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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Report of the RVN Disciplinary Committee

Hearings

Chelesa Jade Strangeway RVN

1. The RVN Committee met virtually between Tuesday 20 September and Wednesday 21 September, to hear and Inquiry into Miss Strangeway. The Inquiry was in relation charges that alleged she had falsified records and was practising whilst unregistered.
2. The first five charges related to separate occasions in 2020 where Miss Strangeway falsely claimed on hospitalisation records that she had attended the practice where she was employed to monitor hospitalised animals overnight, when she had not in fact done so. In two of the cases Miss Strangeway also recorded on the form that she had provided the prescribed medication.
3. The sixth charge was that between 1 January and 10 February 2020, she had held herself out and practised as a registered veterinary nurse, despite not being on the RCVS Register at the time. The remaining two charges related to the fact that her conduct as described in the previous charges was dishonest, misleading and potentially detrimental to animal welfare.
4. The Committee first went on to establish whether the facts can be proved. After seeing CCTV evidence and hearing Miss Strangeway's admissions, the Committee found all factual allegations proved.
5. The Committee then went on to establish whether Miss Strangeway's conduct amount to serious professional misconduct. In doing so the Committee took account of the *Code of Professional Conduct*, with particular reference to the requirements for prioritising animal health and welfare, honesty, accurate clinical records, providing appropriate and adequate veterinary nursing care, and being properly registered.
6. The Committee found that Miss Strangeway's conduct did amount to serious professional misconduct based on her dishonesty and the fact the conduct was sustained and repeated and created a risk to animal health and welfare.
7. The full decision on facts and disgraceful conduct can be found here: [Strangeway, Chelsea Jade September 2022 Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Facts and Disgraceful Conduct in a Professional Respect - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
8. Having found serious professional misconduct proven, the Committee went on to consider the most appropriate sanction for Miss Strangeway, taking into account the relevant aggravating and mitigating factors. In terms of aggravating factors, the Committee considered that there was a risk of injury to animals, the sustained nature of the misconduct, that there was actual or potential financial gain, that there was an abuse of a position of trust and responsibility, and that she had shown a wilful disregard of the RCVS and the systems regulating the veterinary nursing profession.
9. In mitigation, the Committee considered that there had been no actual harm to animals, that admissions to the allegations had been made at an early stage, that the respondent had displayed both remorse and insight regarding her conduct, including apologising to the practice, that she was of previously good character, and that she was ordinarily a good veterinary nurse.

10. Ultimately, the Committee decided that Miss Strangeway should be removed from the register. They stated that *“This is a case involving serious dishonesty, sustained over a period of time, and conduct potentially detrimental to animal welfare, as well as willful disregard of professional regulations. Regrettably, the Committee has decided that, in this case, the respondent’s misconduct is so serious that removal from the Register is the only means of protecting animals and the wider public interest.”*
11. The full decision on sanction can be found here: [Strangeway, Chelsea Jade September 2022 Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Sanction - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://www.rcvs.org.uk/decisions/2022/09/22/strangeway-chelsea-jade-september-2022)

Katherine Heyes RVN

1. The Committee Met between Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 September, to hear an Inquiry into Miss Heyes. The Inquiry was in relation to a previous conviction against her, for entering an aircraft when drunk / being drunk in an aircraft. In July 2020, Miss Strangeway plead guilty to the charges against her.
2. At the Disciplinary hearing, Miss Heyes was not legally represented, although she was assisted by a friend.
3. At the start of the hearing, Miss Heyes admitted the facts of her 2020 conviction, for which she had been sentenced to a community order consisting of unpaid work for 80 hours and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £80 and £250 in costs, but denied that the conviction rendered her unfit to practise as a veterinary nurse.
4. The Committee found that the facts of the case were proved, on admission by Miss Heyes and on the basis that the certificate of conviction referred to the criminal offence which Miss Heyes had pleaded guilty to.
5. In reaching its decision, the Committee took into account the evidence before it and the advice of the Legal Assessor. The Committee went on to consider whether Miss Heyes conduct amounted to serious professional misconduct. In doing so the Committee noted that the Disciplinary Guidance stated “A conviction may be related to professional or personal behaviour and whether it renders a respondent veterinary surgeon unfit to practise is a matter of judgment for the Disciplinary Committee. Behaviour unconnected with the practice of veterinary surgery can cause concerns about the protection of animals or the wider public interest.”
6. The Committee concluded that the conviction and underlying behaviour was sufficiently serious that it required a finding that Miss Heyes was unfit to practise veterinary nursing on public interest grounds and that it also breached Code 6.5 of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses which states: ‘Veterinary nurses must not engage in any activity or behaviour that would be likely to bring the profession into disrepute or undermine public confidence in the profession’.
7. Having found serious professional misconduct proven, the Committee went on to consider the most appropriate sanction for Miss Heyes, taking into account the relevant aggravating and mitigating factors. In terms of the aggravating factors, the Committee considered that the nature of the conviction would have caused a risk to passengers, including children and that Miss Heyes had behaved recklessly, falling far below the standard to be expected of a member of the veterinary nursing profession.

8. In mitigation, the Committee considered this was a single and isolated incident, Ms Heyes had no previous disciplinary findings against her and following her conviction she had shown developing insight. It noted that she had continued to practise as a competent and dedicated veterinary nurse.
9. On deciding to reprimand Miss Heyes in respect of the charge and to warn her as to her future conduct, Cerys Jones, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "The Committee decided to reprimand Ms Heyes because of its finding that the charge amounted to disgraceful conduct and rendered Miss Heyes unfit to practise. Such a sanction was necessary in the Committee's view because the conviction brought the profession into disrepute. Whilst the charge was not so serious as to require suspension or removal from the register, the Committee decided it is necessary to issue a formal warning to Ms Heyes as to her future conduct.
10. The full decision can be found here: [Heyes, Katherine September 2022 Decision of the Disciplinary Committee - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

A, Registered Veterinary Nurse

11. The Committee met between 1-2 November, to hearing the Inquiry into a Registered Nurse following their conviction case.
12. A, who was granted anonymity by the Committee to protect their and their family members' safety, had been convicted in court in March 2022 of three charges related to indecent images of children. As a result, A was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment suspended for 24 months, with rehabilitation activities of a maximum 35 days, 12 months mental health treatment, 100 hours unpaid work, 10 years sexual harm prevention order, their name was placed on the sex offenders' register for 10 years and they were ordered to pay £425 prosecution costs.
13. At the outset of the Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee hearing, which took place on 25 and 26 October, the individual, A admitted the convictions and that the conviction rendered A unfit to continue to work as a veterinary nurse.
14. In considering the sanction for the individual, the Committee took into account aggravating factors including that their conviction involved behaviour which increased the risk of harm or injury to human beings, the fact that viewing such images fuelled demand for such exploitative images, and that the conviction related to premeditated sexual misconduct which was sustained or repeated over a period of time.
15. In mitigation the Committee considered that A had taken a number of steps to address the root cause of the offending behaviour, had recognised the seriousness of these offences and had engaged fully with the College throughout the disciplinary process.
16. Paul Morris, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "The Committee decided that the only appropriate and proportionate response to the respondent's convictions was a removal order. Convictions of this kind are fundamentally incompatible with being a registered veterinary nurse. At this point in time, a removal order is the only sanction capable of satisfying the public interest in safeguarding the reputation of the profession of veterinary nursing and ensuring that public confidence in the profession is maintained."

17. The full details of the hearing and the Committee's decision can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary